

POETRY IN LATINGLISH

J. JAMES MANCUSO

Niskayuna, New York

Remember back in Latin class when you had to recite the four principal parts of a Latin verb? Now, for the regular verbs, the pattern was easy enough to grasp and remember: *am*∩ *am-re*, *amav*♣, *am-tum*. All the regular verbs had a stem, and the suffixes you appended to them were predictable: ∩, -are, -av♣, -~tum. However, do you also recall that for some irregular verbs the forms were highly irregular and unpredictable? You found yourself laboriously memorizing such oddities as *sum*, *esse*, *fu*♣, *futurum* and *fer*∩, *ferre*, *tul*♣, *latum*.

Well, bearing that in mind, one can create Latinglish poetry. The rules are simple. Each line contains four and only words which must end in -∩, -ere, -♣, and -um. When it is read aloud, according to the rules of Latin pronunciation, it must sound like English being Latinized, and actually convey meaning in a form of terse, telegraphic speech. The stems of first two words used may be identical or different.

As a first example, here is a familiar poem in Latinglish. On the left it is written as Latin would be. On the right side it is transcribed into a more readable English orthography. Some notes about the liberties I had to take with Latin pronunciation to make American English sounds:

prevocalic v has a w sound. as in "way"

prevocalic I has a y sound as in "yes"

prevocalic ci has a sh sound as in "shop"

a followed by a doubled consonant has the short u sound as in "tub."

o followed by a doubled consonant has the aw sound as in "law"

ai is used for the long I sound as in "high"

ae is used for the short a sound as in "hat"

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Tuincl∩ tuinclere tain♣ starrum,
Vannr∩ vanndere uatiu♣ arrum,
App∩ abbavvere verld♣ sohaium,
Laic∩ daimindere ind♣ scaium.

Twinkle-o, twinkler-ay, tiny, star-um.
Wonder-o, wonder-ay, what-you-ee are-um?
Up-o, above-eray world-ee so-high-um.
Like-o, diamond-eray in de' sky-um.

Here's another, which I am sure you will recognize:

Jingl∩, bellere, olld♣, veium,
Fann∩, raidere, invannhors♣, sleium.

Jingle-o, bell-eray, all de' way-um.
Fun-o, ride-eray, in-one-horse-ee, sleigh-um.

Daeci∩, daeciere, thru♣, snovum,
Invann∩, horsere, open♣, sleium
Over∩, hilsere, v♣, govum
Laef∩, laefere, olld♣, veium.
Bell∩, bellere, babteil♣, ringum
Meic∩, meicere, spirit♣, brautum
Fann∩, fannere, istu♣, singum
Slei∩, slere, songi, tunaitum.

Dash-o, dash-eray, through-ee, snow-um.
In-one-o, horse-eray, open-ee, sleigh-um.
Over-o, hills-eray, we, go-um.
Laugh-o, laugh-eray, all de' way-um.
Bell-o, bell-eray, bobtail-ee, ring-um.
Make-o, make-eray, spirit-ee, bright-um.
Fun-o, fun-eray, is to-ee sing-um.
Sleigh-o, sleigh-ray, song-ee, tonight-um.